

Stop NHI plans now (letter) – Business Day 30 January 2020

Claims of almost R105bn for medical negligence against state tells us what the capability is

It was reported earlier in the week that claims against the state for medical negligence have more than tripled over the past four years, to a staggering R104.5bn in 2019, with patients seeking redress for harm allegedly wrought by an already overstretched public health system. This tells us that the state does not, and probably never will, have the capability to provide efficient medical expertise to the public, whether “privileged” or “underprivileged”.

It is already apparent that doctors have been emigrating in droves, chased out of the country by the ANC, and the implementation of an NHI, where the health minister controls doctors' fees and the costs of medication, will result in a mass exodus. It is also an invitation for looting and corruption, which will finally drive SA into irretrievable insolvency and the collapse of any form of medical service.

I have a young friend who qualified as a doctor in 2004 and served his compulsory state service at a provincial hospital in Port Elizabeth, where he witnessed first-hand the uncontrolled theft of medical supplies and items such as sheets and towels. He has since emigrated to Australia.

That our existing state-run hospitals cannot cope with the day-to-day requirements of the population proves the inadequacy of this government's skills in this area. Surely there must be *someone* in government who reads daily newspapers and can appreciate the risk of proceeding with the NHI proposal and take the necessary stand against it?

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